



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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SBA's ONLINE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER NOW AVAILABLE IN SPANISH

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez announced today that much of the popular Online Women's Business Center (Error! Bookmark not defined.) is now available in Spanish.

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center is a free, interactive, full-service training site on the Internet completely devoted to the needs of women business owners. It offers beginning and existing women entrepreneurs business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, information about SBA services, market research, and technology training.

"This is *the* 21st Century high-tech tool to access information and find experts and peers who will help you navigate your way to economic independence through entrepreneurship," Administrator Alvarez said. "We felt sure this site would be a big hit with women in the United States. What we didn't expect was that, all over the world, women entrepreneurs would find it helpful, too.

"In 1991 few countries had access to the Internet. Today 90 million people in every country have access. We knew that we could not meet the needs of women in English only – in the U.S. alone, Spanish is the first language of about 18 million people," she added. "Translating SBA's Online

Women's Business Center information into Spanish will help the SBA reach more women, help them build successful businesses, raise their standards of living, and improve their communities."

The announcement came during Administrator Alvarez's keynote address before AVANCE, a nonprofit group that supports Hispanic families in parenting and family issues, and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

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Special features on the site include interactive mentoring and individual counseling, topic forums, news groups, and a new comprehensive state-by-state *Resource Guide*, which features a database of local tax and legal requirements, laws, and regulations.

Vice President Al Gore and Administrator Alvarez officially opened the SBA's Online Women's Business Center in January 1998. The site was developed by the North Texas Women's Business Development Center and is sponsored by IBM, JCPenney, NationsBank, GTE, and Avon.

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center uses the business expertise and best practices of the agency's 69 community-based Women's Business Centers in 38 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. These centers offer financial, management, and marketing assistance to a wide variety of geographic areas, population densities, and economic environments, including urban, suburban, and rural areas, with local economies that vary from depressed to thriving. The site's online counseling services are provided by the cyber-chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

For more information on SBA's Online Women's Business Center, the Women's Business Center Program or other SBA programs, visit the agency's home page at **Error! Bookmark not defined.** or the Office of Women's Business Ownership home page at Error! Bookmark not defined.. You may also call the **SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-8-ASK-SBA.**

The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.

America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

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